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ABSTRACT

This document describes the 1988 Search for Excellence in Vocational Programs, which identifies excellence in vocational service programs for persons with disabilities. The three steps of a management strategy to help administrators make changes in programs to achieve excellence are explained: (1) develop an "Excellence Plan": (2) develop a system for assessing excellence; and (3) develop a management strategy. Winners and finalists are profiled in four service areas: (1) community-based work services (winner--Association for Retarded Citizens, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and finalists--Magic City Enterprises, Cheyenne, Wyoming) and Career Services for the Handicapped (Albuquerque, New Mexico); (2) employability development (winner--Easter Seal Society for Children and Adults of Tarrant County, Fort Worth, Texas, and finalists--Goodwill Industries of Lane County, Eugene, Oregon, and South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, West Columbia, South Carolina); (3) facility-based work services (winner--Goodwill Industries-Suncoast, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida, and finalists--Minnesota Diversified Industries, St. Paul, Minnesota, and Napa Valley, P.S.I., Inc., Napa, California); and (4) occupational skill training (winner--Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind, Little Rock, Arkansas, and finalists--Multi Resource Centers, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota, and South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, West Columbia, South Carolina). (NLA)

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An Agenda For Excellence

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The JM Foundation

Acknowledgements

The JM Foundation would like to recognize the following individuals and organizations who contributed so substantially to the third national Search for Excellence in Vocational Programs for people with disabilities. Their participation and assistance was invaluable and without their help, the 1988 Search would not have been successful.

The JM Foundation also extends its appreciation to **Robert A. Walker** and **Gary Prazak** of Walker and Associates, Inc., consultants to the Search program, who developed the process and materials used in the Search and processed the applications submitted. Together with **Chris Olander,** who was appointed Executive Director of the Foundation January 1, 1990, they were the authors of this publication. Finally, we would like to thank the many dedicated rehabilitation professionals throughout the country who prepared and submitted applications for the Search.

Members of the National Advisory Committee that set policies and contributed many ideas to this awards program were:

Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
Alan Toppel, Executive Director

Goodwill Industries of America
David Cooney, President

ICD-International Center for the Disabled
John Wingate, Executive Director

Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities
David Stover, Executive Director

The JM Foundation
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The National Easter Seal Society
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Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission
Terry Etling, Assistant Commissioner

Rehabilitation Services Administration
Mark Shoob, Deputy Director

South Carolina Rehabilitation Department
Joe Dusenbury, Commissioner

United Cerebral Palsy Associations
Jim Hollahan, National Program Coordinator

A distinguished panel of judges headed by Jeremiah Milbank, Jr., President of The JM Foundation, carefully reviewed each of the finalists and selected the award winners. The panel members for the 1988 Search were:

Douglas A. Fenderson, Ph.D.
University of Minnesota Medical School

Paul G. Hearne
Executive Director, The Dole Foundation for Employment of People With Disabilities

Edward J. O'Malley
Personnel Director, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Ralph Pacinelli, Ph.D.
Regional Director, Rehabilitation Services Administration

Ann Turnbull, Ph.D.
Co-Director, Beach Center on Families and Disability
University of Kansas

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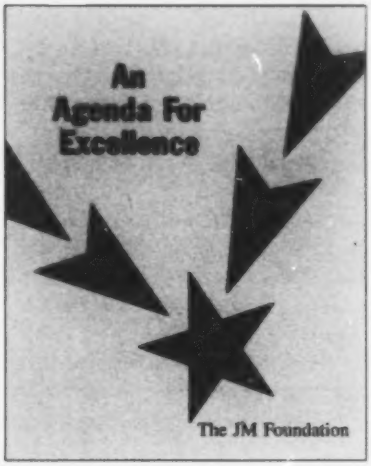

Develop your own Agenda for Excellence!
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Search '88 judges include (L-R) Professor Douglas Fenderson, University of Minnesota Medical School; Edward O'Malley, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; Professor Ann Turnbull, University of Kansas; Jeremiah Milbank, Jr.; Dr. Ralph Pacinelli, Rehabilitation Services Administration; and Paul Hearne, The Dole Foundation.

History and Description of the Search for Excellence

The Search for Excellence in Vocational Programs began in 1982 when The JM Foundation Directors decided to identify excellence in vocational service programs for persons with disabilities. The first national Search for outstanding programs in 1986 was the product of several years of planning, consulting with national leaders in rehabilitation, and conducting field studies. The purpose of the approach selected was to seek out the nation's very best vocational rehabilitation programs, provide them with national recognition, and encourage others to also achieve excellence.

The National Advisory Committee, whose members are listed in the Acknowledgements, meets each year to review the overall Search effort and makes recommendations on issues such as eligibility, marketing, program categories, strategies to reach potential applicants, recognition of winners and finalists, and replication of programmatic excellence.

Most awards programs recognize well-known individuals or organizations who have made significant contributions to the field of rehabilitation. The JM Foundation chose instead to assess excellence by determining the extent to which various vocational programs benefit the people they serve. Measures are used to assess those benefits that make a real difference in the lives of people with disabilities. The measures used are also objective enough to make fair and reasonable comparisons across many different kinds of organizations which operate in a variety of communities serving different populations.

In addition to measuring benefits to persons served, a second category of data is used to determine how productively these programs make use of their personnel and financial resources. Program-specific measures of efficiency and productivity are applied such as program cost, the length of time that people are served in order to achieve significant results, and the use of personnel and other resources committed to these programs. In effect, a program that achieves a high level of benefits for those it serves at a reasonable cost is considered exemplary.

Benefits to persons served and program productivity are affected by variables that are not under the influence of program staff. Therefore, the selection of exemplary programs also took into account factors that tend to make it more difficult to achieve a high level of results or might increase costs, such as the size of the community served by the program, the local unemployment rate, and the severity of disability and other characteristics of the people served.

Walker and Associates, Inc. of Minneapolis, working with The JM Foundation staff, developed the application materials, processed applications, and rank ordered all applicants in each of four categories. The selection process begins when every application is reviewed for eligibility, completeness and accuracy. Each year since 1986 the proportion of eligible applications has increased. In 1988 less than 10% of all applications could not be used. All application data are entered into a computer to facilitate analysis.

Excellence is determined by applying several measures of benefits to persons served (e.g., the percentage obtaining competitive employment), and measures of program productivity (e.g., the average cost per client per day). Weights reflecting the importance of each measure are assigned so that a single "score" of overall excellence for each applicant can be calculated. Adjustments are then made in this score to take into account the difficulty level of persons served, such as community size and other factors that show a significant relationship with performance. The adjusted overall excellence scores are then rank ordered to identify several potential

Jeremiah Milbank, Jr. (R) and William Bennett (Center), former Secretary of Education and now Director of Drug Control Policy, share the podium with the Search for Excellence National Advisory Committee, including representatives from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, Goodwill Industries of America, ICD-International Center for the Disabled, Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, The JM Foundation, National Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, National Council on Independent Living, The National Easter Seal Society, National Rehabilitation Association, Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, Rehabilitation Services Administration, South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, and the United Cerebral Palsy Associations.

finalists in each program category.

The highest ranked applicants that emerge through this process are contacted to verify the data submitted and to obtain further descriptive information about the program. Telephone interviews are also made with other individuals familiar with the applicants such as advocates and referral and funding sources to determine how the program is regarded locally. Detailed information on each of the finalists drawn from the applications and telephone contacts are sent to the judges for their review. This includes information on benefits for persons served, program cost and productivity, a summary of information obtained from various telephone contacts and a narrative description of each program submitted by finalists. The selection panel, chaired by Jeremiah Milbank, Jr., President of The JM Foundation, meets to share their views on each finalist and determine the winning program in each category.

The award ceremony for the 1988 Search was held December 15, 1988 at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. Awards to the winners and finalists were presented by William Bennett, former Secretary of Education, who is currently serving as the Director of National Drug Control Policy. The winning programs each received $20,000 and, along with the eight finalists, awards designed especially for the Search. Each applicant to the Search was also sent an "Excellence Report" briefly summarizing their overall performance ranking, and how their performance compared to all other applicants on several key measures.

Project staff made site visits to obtain additional information on each of the winning programs. This monograph, *An Agenda for Excellence*, is the third in a series which highlights the outstanding achievements of America's finest vocational programs. In addition to describing exemplary programs from the 1988 Search, this publication is intended to help vocational rehabilitation professionals achieve excellence and maximize benefits to people with disabilities.

Developing An Agenda For Excellence

It has been four years since The JM Foundation conducted the first nationwide Search for Excellence. The experience has been gratifying in many ways. All across the country we found excellent programs and talented staff that consistently achieve outstanding benefits for persons with disabilities. We also found ineffective programs that help only a handful of participants.

We have learned a great deal about excellence in the past four years. Utilizing technology developed for the Search, we can now measure the range of benefits achieved by those served and, more importantly, define the outcomes that one should expect to receive from various programs. Our experience has resulted in an exciting concept called the "Agenda for Excellence" that we believe can revitalize rehabilitation facilities. The Agenda offers a challenging opportunity to achieve significant increases in benefits and program productivity.

Seven years ago when we initially began planning the Search, we found that excellence was a loosely defined term. Most awards were given to individuals instead of programs and recognition was based on vague impressions rather than measured performance. With the support of our National Advisory Committee, the Search judges, and other leaders in the field, we decided to define excellence in terms of benefits actually obtained by people with disabilities. We also began using productivity measures to assess how efficiently programs used their resources.

We found an enthusiastic audience for the Search for Excellence. During the first four years we received nearly 1,000 applications from a wide variety of organizations that provide vocational rehabilitation services. The need for excellence was endorsed by distinguished public figures including then Vice President George Bush, Senator Bob Dole, former Secretary of Education William Bennett and James Brady, Vice Chairman of the National Organization on Disability,

all of whom participated in gala celebrations to recognize the most outstanding programs. Many leaders from the field of rehabilitation and other related areas also demonstrated their commitment to excellence by participating in the national award ceremonies honoring Search winners and finalists.

The applications we received from facilities resulted in a very large national database on performance. We can now describe how well almost 1,000 vocational rehabilitation programs served over 50,000 persons with disabilities. For the first time, it is possible to define reasonable standards of excellence, such as the proportion of persons served who should obtain competitive employment following skill training or a reasonable wage level for participants in supported employment. Our research using this data has helped us to identify factors that affect outcomes – the most important influence being the difficulty level of those served. To the surprise of many, we found that some factors such as local unemployment rates and the amount of funds spent to provide services do not appreciably affect outcomes.

Every year the Search for Excellence was conducted, we found programs that dramatically out-performed others. Some results were upsetting to anyone who cares about empowering people to lead productive, self-sufficient lives. One facility, for example, placed 42% of those in its work adjustment program into competitive employment, while only a few miles away, a similar program serving people with similar disabilities succeeded in placing only 17%. One state had programs that, on average, provided annual earnings in supported employment of just under $5,000, while in a neighboring state, participants in several programs earned less than half that amount.

While we anticipated that the top facilities would do well on various measures of excellence, we were not prepared when the data showed that the highest ranked one-fourth of employability development programs helped 50% of persons served get back to work while the lowest one-fourth succeeded with only 16%. Similarly, we were concerned about the substantial gap between the top and lowest ranked facilities when our data on supported employment showed that the top ranked programs had client earnings and benefits of $8,100 a year while the bottom ranked programs provided less than $2,200 to each person.

Our first conclusion is clear. Exemplary programs are far better than the average, while others provide very few benefits to the people they serve.

Significantly, we found that facilities which helped participants to achieve exemplary benefits also tended to be low in cost. Programs with "enriched services," higher ratios of staff to participants, and higher costs do not necessarily achieve more benefits for clients than less expensive programs. On the other hand, we were pleased to learn that excellence is not limited to large, experienced, urban-based programs. In fact, new and emerging programs in small communities often out-performed their larger and more well-known colleagues.

Our first conclusion is clear. Exemplary programs are far better than the average, while others provide very few benefits to the people they serve. In human terms, this means that a person with a disability is more likely to get a job from some programs simply because they are fortunate enough to be served by an organization that consistently achieves good results.

The gap between the results achieved by the top programs and those at the bottom is very large. In fact, depending on the measure used, the better facilities provide from three to eight times more benefits, and often do so at significantly less cost.

We also found that these large discrepancies in outcomes cannot be fully explained by factors such as serving more "difficult" or severely disabled people, location in a small community, or a higher than average unemployment rate. Thus, a thorough review of Search data, as well as published research, demonstrates that some programs are far better than others, results do not necessarily get better over time, and that poor results cannot be accounted for by factors "beyond the control" of service providers whose programs are not doing well.

Excellence in vocational programs is not necessarily achieved by adopting technology-based solutions. Programmatic success, for example, is not assured if a facility uses computers, installs work samples that cleverly identify job skills, or adopts counseling techniques based on the latest rehabilitation theories. Instead, exemplary performance seems to be related to an unyielding commitment to excellence on the part of at least one of the following: funders who purchase services and make it clear they expect results; facility boards who expect to be told what happens to persons a program serves; managers who provide feedback to staff when results are less than expected and allow staff freedom to decide how results should be improved; or front-line staff who hold themselves personally accountable for achieving program goals. Furthermore, this commitment, regardless of its source, empowers staff with a strong drive and the resourcefulness to achieve benefits for people with disabilities. Simply stated, when excellence is found in programs, direct service staff are always highly motivated to achieve outcomes and they usually have been monitored, encouraged, and supported by others who expect good results.

If excellence is to be achieved, it requires a serious, long-term commitment. The pursuit of excellence requires that providers adopt standards, assess achievement on a regular basis, and use this know-

ledge to improve their programs. Our first Search in 1986 demonstrated that nearly 90% of the applicants did not have systems in place which could describe the level of benefits achieved and maintained by those served after they left the program. Still fewer organizations could accurately describe how efficiently they managed time, staff, and financial resources in operating a program. Administrators cannot expect to improve services without having sufficient objective data to help evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of new approaches.

Vocational rehabilitation organizations have many fine programs, but they can do better, much better. The relative scarcity of excellent performance has not been due to a lack of will. A great deal of effort and millions of dollars on research and training have been spent to improve vocational programs. Those investments have resulted in hundreds of well-written publications, workshops, and skillfully provided consultations. In spite of these efforts, too many people with disabilities are ill-served in vocational programs.

It is time to replace approaches that have not worked with one that will.

This new strategy must become an integral part of the facility as long as it continues to serve people with disabilities. Further, the approach must be self-correcting and enable the organization to constantly achieve excellence regardless of changes in funding preferences or the types of persons who are served. Finally, the approach should not be prescriptive and assume that there is one "best" solution for every program or organization.

There is considerable evidence that one approach works, and works very well. It is one that does not necessarily require new staff, additional funds, or complicated research. Instead, it taps the creativity that already exists in every facility and establishes partnerships with resources where help is needed. This concept is called the *Agenda for Excellence*.

The *Agenda* is based on the time-tested strategy of cybernetics that has helped complex organizations succeed for many years. The cybernetics process begins with a commitment by decisionmakers to achieve clearly defined goals, obtain feedback on how well the goals are realized, and make programmatic changes until goals are achieved. It has three major components, all of which are vitally important: an overall plan, a system to assess the level of excellence achieved, and a management strategy that helps administrators and others make changes in programs to achieve excellence.

STEP ONE

Develop an Excellence Plan

The pursuit of excellence is an important task that should start with a written plan describing how excellence will be achieved.

- Make a commitment to excellence and make the commitment public. For example, have a resolution on excellence passed by the Board of Directors, formally announce the effort to staff at a specially convened meeting, prepare a written announcement and send it to key people in the community, and talk with funders and colleagues.
- Set up a work group that will plan and implement the *Agenda*. Develop an "Excellence Task Force" with a strong leader and participants who will make the *Agenda* succeed. Provide the work group with a budget to cover any extra costs needed to carry out their mission.
- Develop an "Excellence Plan" and set dates for its implementation. Start by establishing a clear purpose such as "develop, install and operate an *Agenda for Excellence* that will improve benefits to clients and increase program productivity." The plan should outline who should be involved in developing the excellence system, (e.g., board, funders, supervisors, line staff, consultants, etc.), which programs will become part of the *Agenda* (e.g., work adjustment, supported work, etc.) and what the schedule is for completion of key tasks.

STEP TWO

Develop a System for Assessing Excellence

Achieving excellence means that methods must be developed to determine current and future levels of performance.

- Decide on the program measures that can pinpoint current levels of excellence. Measures for time-limited job programs such as work adjustment might include job entry rates, job retention, and average weekly earnings. For long-term programs such as supported work or sheltered work, consider measures such as annualized earnings or the extent to which job sites are integrated. Select productivity measures that assess staff efficiency and the use of budgeted dollars. In order to tell whether changes in results are related to the severity of persons served, develop measures that can tell you if the people you are serving are becoming more difficult – or easier – to serve. A review of the measures used in the 1988 Search for Excellence will provide additional examples of potential measures for the most common programs found in vocational rehabilitation settings.
- For each measure of benefits and productivity, set standards of excellence to compare your actual accomplishments. Set one level that you fully expect to achieve and set a lower level that tells you if the program's results are seriously low. Set standards for every benefit and productivity measure even if you are not certain how realistic they are. Standards can always be adjusted later based on experience and further consultation with colleagues, funders, and community leaders. The examples in the

Examples of Measures and Performance Standards

Programs and Measures	High Performance	Low Performance
A. Employability Development (Work Adjustment)		
1. % obtaining permanent full-time competitive employment	50%	16%
2. % obtaining any vocational benefit	64%	31%
3. Average cost per person per day	$ 14	$104
B. Community-Based Work Services (Supported Employment)		
1. Average monthly earnings and benefits per person served	$675	$168
2. Average cost per person per day	$ 10	$ 58
C. Facility-Based Work Services (Sheltered Employment)		
1. Average monthly earnings and benefits per person served	$290	$ 35
2. Average cost per person per day	$ 10	$ 43

above table illustrate the two levels of standards. The "high" standard is approximately the average for the top 25% of Search applicants (e.g., the programs with the highest percent of placement into competitive employment or the programs with the lowest average daily cost.) The "low" standard listed is the average for the lowest 25% of the Search applicants.

- Design a data collection system so that excellence can be systematically measured and compared. Instructions must be written, collection forms developed, and someone must be assigned the responsibility for monitoring data collection.

STEP THREE

Develop a Management Strategy

The third component of an *Agenda for Excellence* is a results-focused management strategy.

- Start by developing a utilization plan which describes in detail how feedback on results will be used to increase performance. Include statements that describe who will receive data, how authority and responsibility will be assigned, and what process will be followed to make changes in programs to achieve excellence.
- Establish a quality control unit whose job is to make sure every performance report is timely and accurate. Independently verify data on a sample of clients to make sure the definitions of success are easy to understand. Check all excellence reports for computing errors and completeness.
- Develop a process for achieving excellence. Describe how decisions will be made to identify when a program needs improvement and the process that will be used to improve it. To increase excellence, develop a format for an "excellence intervention," including who is responsible for making changes to achieve excellence and how the process will be monitored to assure the plan is carried out.
- Identify potential resources for information and advice in making the changes that will enable your programs to achieve excellence. The range of such resources is limited only by the commitment and imagination of those involved in carrying out an *Agenda for Excellence*.

Vocational rehabilitation facilities have a rich tradition of concern for people and a well-deserved reputation for providing quality services. In spite of these accomplishments, vocational professionals must use their considerable talents to increase excellence – and in doing so, establish high standards of performance for all programs that serve disabled people.

During his 1988 Presidential campaign, George Bush stated, "I'm going to do whatever it takes to make sure the disabled are included in the mainstream. For too long they've been left out, but they're not going to be left out any more." President Bush also praised the national network of voluntary agencies and characterized them as a "thousand points of light." In his inaugural address, the President stated his intentions to seek out those that are the "brighter points of light."

Through their association with the Search for Excellence, the President and other leaders across America have demonstrated their commitment to excellence. Organizations providing vocational programs to persons with disabilities now have the potential and, more importantly, the obligation to achieve excellence and join those "brighter points of light." On behalf of everyone who has made The JM Foundation Search for Excellence such a success, we urge you to adopt an *Agenda for Excellence* and to accept nothing less than the best for yourself and those you serve.

WINNER

Association for Retarded Citizens – New Jersey

North Brunswick, New Jersey

FINALISTS

Career Services for the Handicapped

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Magic City Enterprises

Cheyenne, Wyoming

Introduction

This category includes programs usually called supported employment which provide ongoing support services to persons who would otherwise not be able to obtain and maintain a job in the community.

Ninety-three applications were received from 29 states. Data presented here is based on 85 programs for which complete information was available. In total these programs serve about 3,200 people in a typical month and over 4,700 in a year at an annual cost of $17 million.

The following data using median values characterizes the typical community-based work services program:

- Generates $4,600 in annual earnings and fringe benefits for each participant
- 33% of those who leave the program for any reason obtain competitive employment (without on-going support services) or occupational skill training
- Has been in operation only 31 months, in sharp contrast to the typical facility-based work services program which has been operating for over 12 years
- Serves 39 persons a year, providing 25 hours of paid work per week and hourly wages of $3.47
- Has 5.0 full-time equivalent direct service staff and a ratio of 4.4 participants per staff
- Has an annual program budget of $134,000 (not including participant wages) and an average daily operating cost of $24 per person
- Operated by an organization with an overall annual budget of $2.5 million, in a community with an unemployment rate of 5.1%

Program excellence was assessed by using the measures shown in the table below. Each measure was then assigned a weight that reflects the relative importance of that measure in calculating an index of overall excellence.

Three measures of program effectiveness were used. The first determined the overall annual average dollar value of each participant's wages and fringe benefits. Fringe benefits include such items as paid vacation, holidays, sick leave and health care insurance. The second measure assesses the quality of the work site, particularly the extent there are opportunities to interact with non-disabled persons including other employees, customers, etc. The third effectiveness measure is the percentage of persons who left the program for any reason during a recent two year period who obtained competitive employment (without ongoing support services) or who entered an occupational skill training program.

Assessment of Program Excellence

Measures of Excellence	Weighted Values
1. Benefits to persons while in the program	
a. Dollar value of earnings and fringe benefits	50%
b. Quality of work site	15%
2. Benefits to former participants	
Percentage obtaining competitive employment or occupational skill training	5%
3. Program productivity	
a. Average program cost per person per day	5%
b. Ratio of participant days to direct service staff days	5%
4. Modifiers	
a. Severity of program participants	15%
b. Population of area served by program	5%
	100%

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Two measures of program efficiency or productivity were used; the average cost per day per program participant and the client/staff ratio – the average number of participant days per day of direct service staff time.

Two factors were used as modifiers of excellence scores. The first was the severity or difficulty level of persons served. This factor has more impact on program performance than any other, except perhaps the actual quality of the program. An index of client difficulty was developed which is based on the average number of particular characteristics at the time people entered the program. Characteristics included type of disability such as mild or moderate/severe mental retardation, chronic mental illness, and other factors such as behaviors on the job that are unacceptable to employers and other employees, and the need for assistance or supervision to remain living in the community.

The following shows the percent of 4,718 persons served over a period of a year with various characteristics that were used to account for relative difficulty level. The typical person served in this program had 2.1 such characteristics at the time of entry to the program.

- Medical or physical condition that restricts activities (19%)
- Significant limiting medical/physical condition (7%)
- Mental illness, diagnosed (18%)
- Chronic mental illness, history of multiple or extensive hospitalization (52%)
- Mental retardation, mild (52%)
- Mental retardation, moderate or severe (19%)
- Unacceptable behaviors at work (18%)
- Require assistance/supervision of another person in order to live in the community (51%)

The second modifier was the population of the area served by each applicant organization. There is a low positive correlation between area population and earnings in community-based work service programs. Programs in areas with high population tend to have higher earnings for their participants than those in areas with a low population. Therefore, area population for each applicant was converted into a percentile ranking and used, in effect, to boost the scores of applicants in low population areas.

Winner/Community-Based Work Services

Association for Retarded Citizens – New Jersey

North Brunswick, New Jersey

Although this program is less than five years old, Project HIRE (Handicapped Individuals Requiring Employment) has distinguished itself as the 1988 Search for Excellence winner in the category of Community-Based Work Services.

Project HIRE is a statewide supported employment program designed to place adults with developmental disabilities into integrated competitive work settings, earning minimum wage or higher. The employee receives support at the work site by an employment training specialist who works with the individual until he or she becomes proficient at the assigned tasks. The program emphasizes individual placements and will not generally place more than three individuals within the same company.

History, Background

The program was developed in 1985 in response to a State Division of Developmental Disabilities request for proposals for supported employment programs using the individual placement model. In the State of New Jersey there are 36 vocational rehabilitation facilities and more than 100 adult training centers. Although the rehabilitation centers place people who are job ready into competitive employment, most do not provide an intensive support system or place individuals with severe disabilities into supported employment. While ARCs around the country are not typically involved in direct service vocational programs, the ARC-New Jersey (ARC/NJ) took on the project with great enthusiasm and creativity.

Supported employment was considered to be a new concept in New Jersey in the early 1980s and it took some time to catch on. ARC/NJ staff decided at the start that the director of Project HIRE should be from outside of the rehabilitation community. In fact, this project is quite different in that virtually none of the staff has a standard vocational rehabilitation background. The staff hired to implement the project had few preconceived notions about the employability of persons with severe disabilities, maintaining that anyone who wants to work can do so regardless of disabling condition. Instead of evaluating why someone could not work, staff concentrate their efforts on getting people into jobs.

Using a "place-train" employment model, ARC/NJ's program uses both job developers and job coaches. The rationale in having two separate positions is that job development (matching the person with the job) and job coaching (on-the-job training and follow-through) are separate functions which require very specific

After three years on his job as a maintenance worker, Michael Trucksess is now making $8.00 an hour with a major national grocery chain.

skills and training. Job development requires a great deal of time to nurture prospective employers and develop contacts. Job coaching is also time-consuming and initially, a coach has little time to do anything else. The continuity needed in the placement process can be lost when one person is reponsible for both job development and job coaching. Therefore, the two tasks evolved into two distinct positions.

Description of the Program

Revenue for and referrals to the project come from three sources – the State Division of Developmental Disabilities, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Headquartered in the State's ARC office in North Brunswick, Project HIRE operates out of seven regional offices throughout New Jersey and, in 1988, had a staff of 27 people including three in adminstration, six job developers, and 18 employment training specialists (job coaches). Staffing has since increased to accommodate larger numbers of participants.

Project HIRE staff identify, interview, and assess potential program participants who have been determined to be ready for employment training. The only criteria for acceptance to the project are that individuals have a developmental disability, be motivated to work, and their families must be supportive. The median age of program participants is 31. Most candidates have histories of poor job performance, have worked only in sheltered workshops, or have no work record whatsoever. Thus, staff must be creative in their approach to serving these individuals and meeting their specific needs.

An initial interview determines areas of vocational interest, the geographic area in which the person could work and through a personal asessment, establishes the specific needs for job and transportation training. Support from parents and other significant individuals is stressed as being crucial to the employment success of each individual.

Staff realize that successful job placements are a direct result of thorough preparation which matches the right person with the right job. The level and amount of training provided to the the employee will be irrelevant and unproductive unless a good job match is made initially. Experience has indicated that even the most talented job coach cannot salvage a poor match.

Local employers are identified and contacted to assess their interest in employing persons with developmental disabilities. Project staff learn about the positions available in each company, the skills necessary to qualify for a job, the job specifications for the positions targeted, and the benefit packages available to employees. This information helps determine who is best suited for each job and the training format to implement.

Project HIRE is fortunate that it can be selective among potential employers. New Jersey has a low unemployment rate (less than four %) because there is a tremendous need to accommodate growing business and industry with a productive workforce. However, regardless of the number of employers interested in becoming involved with Project HIRE, the philosophy in placement has always been "quality over quantity." Consequently, "mismatches" are rare.

Instead of evaluating why someone could not work, staff concentrate their efforts on getting people into jobs.

Program participants typically receive jobs which fit their interests, have relatively stable working environments, and also offer the possibility of upward mobility. When the person-job matches do not work out, the person is placed on another job site. When job requirements change or a participant needs additional training to be promoted, staff provide the necessary job coaching. Currently, 77% of the project's clients who were placed remain successfully employed on either their first or a subsequent job. Program staff continue to provide ongoing support services to workers who were the first placed when Project HIRE began over four years ago.

Most jobs are in the following areas: food service, janitorial and

Veronica Mesko, who had never been employed before coming to ARC/NJ, now prices merchandise for a local home improvement center.

maintenance, retailing (bakeries, grocery and department stores), clerical services, computer data entry, manufacturing, and production. By the end of 1988 over 250 persons had been placed in jobs. Earnings average $4.32 per hour and range from $3.35 to $7.50.

Once an individual has completed a job interview and has been hired, an employment training specialist or job coach from HIRE is assigned. Together they first address the individual's transportation situation and determine how he or she will get to work in the most independent possible way including public transportation, car pools, and walking. The program does not provide transportation.

Most Project HIRE participants have never had a job before so they are unfamiliar with many aspects of working. The individual is faced with several new concepts and situations during the work orientation phase. An employment training specialist instructs the individual worker on the tasks of his or her job, daily schedules, working conditions, rules and regulations, and employer expectations. This job coaching phase ranges from two to 16 weeks, averaging three to four weeks.

During the first week or two, the job coach actually performs the job along with the new employee. Gradually, the coach allows the worker to assume responsibility for more of the job tasks, constantly reinforcing appropriate work habits. The length of the training period varies among program participants based on specific job requirements and the capacities of each individual.

Socialization is also an important part of the orientation phase. The job coach helps the new employee "break the ice" with fellow co-workers as much as possible while continually stressing appropriate behaviors and interactions. In addition, the coach often helps co-workers understand disability, addressing their misconceptions and prejudices while encouraging positive interaction. The employment training specialist also coordinates necessary support services, appropriate social and recreational activities, and works with the case manager to secure needed community sevices and resources.

Complete responsibility for supervising the individual is transferred to the employer or front-line supervisor when the individual meets criteria established for job performance. The employer has ready access to the project staff whenever needed for the purposes of additional training or problem resolution. Staff maintain contact with every person at least twice a month. Individuals who, during or after the training period, are determined to be mismatched with a particular job are re-evaluated and placed in another available job.

Project HIRE continues to grow and to take on new challenges. In the fall of 1988 the program began working with individuals who have significant visual impairments in addition to a developmental disability such as mental retardation or cerebral palsy.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
Thomas Baffuto, Project Director
or,
John Scagnelli, Executive Director
Association for Retarded Citizens/ New Jersey
985 Livingston Avenue
North Brunswick, NJ 08902
Telephone: (201) 246-2525

Finalist/Community-Based Work Services

Career Services for the Handicapped

Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Supervised Employment Program is one of two supported employment programs operated by Career Services. In fact, all programs are located in the community rather than in a workshop or other rehabilitation facility. This program differs from most community-based work services programs in that it functions essentially as a contract employment agency for persons with disabilities. Program participants are employees of Career Services and work on jobs in the community. Career Services obtains contracts with community employers to provide workers for both temporary and permanent jobs. The fee charged employers covers wages and fringe benefits as well as operating costs. There are no state or local governmental agency grants or fees for service used to support program costs.

For some participants the program is a transitional experience to competitive employment without ongoing support services, while others may continue receiving support services for years in order to maintain

Ben Prieto (seated) and Andrew Borrego maintain personal files for Sandia National Laboratories.

employment. Participants receive the same benefits as other employees of Career Services and earn an average of $5.50 per hour. Benefits after three months in the program include full medical-health coverage through an HMO, dental care, and life insurance as well as paid holidays, sick leave, and vacation time.

In a typical month the program serves 30-35 people. Program participants have a wide variety of disabling conditions including mental retardation, behavior problems, mental illness, hearing and vision impairments, and physical disabilities. Many live in supervised housing or otherwise need assistance to maintain themselves in the community. All placements are individual, none are on mobile work crews. Typical jobs include telephone answering, data entry, word processing and other clerical work, manual labor, production assembly and janitorial work.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:

Mary Modrow, Director of Supervised Employment, Career Services for the Handicapped
4401 A Lomas Boulevard, NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
Telephone: (505) 265-7936

After being unemployed for over two years, this participant in the Supported Employment Program holds two part-time jobs and is considered to be the top employee at a local restaurant.

Finalist/Community-Based Work Services

Magic City Enterprises

Cheyenne, Wyoming

Magic City Enterprises has been serving people with disabilities since 1972. It provides a variety of programs in addition to supported employment including: work evaluation, work adjustment, work activity, sheltered employment, and residential services.

The Supported Employment Program of Magic City Enterprises began in 1980 with mobile work crews doing janitorial work and lawn maintenance. It expanded in 1984 with a contract at the Warren Air Force Base commissary (shelf stocking, maintenance and warehousing for 22 workers) and again in 1987 with a variety of individual placements (food preparation, welding, housekeeping, laundry work, nursing home aide, restaurant dishwashing, clerical.) The combination of jobs on work crews, the air base enclave, and individually arranged placements provides a diversity of opportunities to persons with a wide variety of capabilities and interests. Most participants are developmentally disabled, but the program also serves persons with mental illness and physical disabilities. A high proportion have multiple disabilities and have never worked before on a competitive job.

The program operates with a staff of 6.5 full-time equivalents and serves 30-35 people at any one time. Earnings average $4.10 an hour with a range from as low as $1.62 to as much as $7.86 per hour. Program costs (under $7.50 per day in 1988) are covered by fees for the first 18 months of program participation. However, support and monitoring services continue to be provided as long as needed. The program demonstrates that supported employment programs can operate successfully in smaller communties (the population of Laramie County is under 75,000) and despite an unemployment rate of nearly 8%.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:

John Firestone, C.E.O.
or,
Laura McKinney
Rehabilitation Manager
Magic City Enterprises
P. O. Box 925
Cheyenne, WY 82003
Telephone: (307) 635-0166

WINNER

Easter Seal Society for Children and Adults of Tarrant County

Fort Worth, Texas

FINALISTS

Goodwill Industries of Lane County

Eugene, Oregon

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

West Columbia, South Carolina

Introduction

The 1988 Search category Employability Development includes both facility-based and community-based programs. There are various models and names for employability development programs such as Work Adjustment which are commonly found in most rehabilitation facilities. Some programs use work sites in the community where participants engage in paid work while getting help from program staff to resolve various problems that affect their employability.

Services are aimed at resolving work habit, productivity, and personal problems that limit a person's employability. Most people served have never worked before or have a history of losing jobs because of performance problems. The primary goal for all programs in this category is to obtain competitive employment.

Forty-six applications were received from programs in 19 states. Data presented here is based on 35 programs for which complete information was available. These programs have a total annual cost of $5.3 million and served almost 2,300 people.

The following data using median values characterize the "typical" employability development program:

- Enabled 29% of those served to become competitively employed, and an additional 7% to obtain supported employment or skill training
- Average weekly earnings of $150 for those competitively employed three months after leaving the program
- An average cost per day per person of $39
- Direct service staff of four full-time equivalent persons, and a ratio of one staff person to 3.7 program participants
- Operated for 10 years by an organization with a total annual budget of $2.7 million
- Has annual program expenditures of $97,000
- Serves an area with a population of about 525,000 and an unemployment rate of 6.0%
- Nearly half provide most services within a facility setting, a third primarily use community work sites, and about one in seven use both types of settings

Program excellence was assessed in terms of effectiveness (benefits to persons served) and program efficiency (productive use of resources) and then adjusted by the difficulty level of those served. The first of three benefit measures was the percentage of persons who obtained full-time competitive employment. The second measure was the percentage who obtained supported employment, competitive employment, or occupational skill training. The third was the average weekly earnings of persons who were competitively employed 90 days after leaving the program.

The second group of excellence measures assess program productivity or efficiency – the average program cost per person per day and the ratio of persons served to direct service staff. This ratio was calculated by dividing the number of client program days provided over 12 months by the number of direct service staff days for that same period.

A measure of client difficulty was used to adjust the initial excellence score by taking into account the average level of severity of disability and other characteristics that tend to lower success rates and increase costs. Therefore, programs serving more severely disabled people, in effect, got an increase in their overall excellence score while programs serving less severely disabled people had their scores decreased.

The characteristics of almost 2,300 persons served by these programs are summarized in the following table. The typical person had 1.8 such disabling conditions and other characteristics.

- Medical or physical condition that restricts activities (40%)
- Significant limiting physical/medical condition (14%)
- Mental illness, diagnosed (31%)
- Chronic mental illness (16%)

- Mental retardation, mild level (36%)
- Mental retardation, moderate or severe (4%)
- Unacceptable behaviors at work (16%)
- Require assistance/supervision of another person to live in the community (23%)

Assessment of Program Excellence

Measures of Excellence	Weighted Values
1. Benefits to persons served	
a. Percent who obtained full-time competitive employment	55%
b. Percent who obtained competitive or supported employment or skill training	15%
c. Average weekly earnings in competitive employment	10%
2. Productivity/efficiency	
a. Average cost per person per day	5%
b. Ratio of participants to direct service staff	5%
3. Level of severity of persons served	10%
	100%

Winner/Employability Development

Easter Seal Society for Children and Adults of Tarrant County

Fort Worth, Texas

The winning program in the employability development category for 1988 is Project Genesis at Easter Seal Society of Tarrant County in Fort Worth, Texas. The program serves persons who have sustained traumatic brain injuries. The goal for all participants is to become competitively employed. Most program participants have both cognitive and physical deficits which continue to impact independent functioning and limit their employability. The program has achieved a high level of success by providing a highly structured, and at the same time a highly individualized, set of services to meet the unique needs of participants.

History, Background

The Easter Seal Society for Children and Adults of Tarrant County was established in Fort Worth in 1946 with the help and support of many civic organizations and community leaders. Originally named the Training and Treatment Center for Pre-school Cerebral Palsied Children, the agency has gone through a number of changes in the past 40 years, broadening its focus and program services. It serves Tarrant County and seven other counties in the Fort Worth area.

In addition to Project Genesis, Easter Seal offers physical, occupational, and speech therapies; social work, medical, psychological, and audiology services; transportation assistance; equipment loans; case management services for children with special health needs; work activity; evaluation of physical capacity; work hardening; and Expanded Horizons, a second program for persons who have had traumatic head injuries and are unlikely to return to work. Several new programs and expansions occurred in the last three years in response to priority rehabilitation needs identified in the community. Funding for program growth has come from a variety of sources including foundation grants, individual contributions, the United Way, and program fees. Resource development has been a challenge because of the continuing slump in the Texas economy and other local factors affecting charitable giving.

For the fiscal year ending August 31, 1988, Easter Seal provided services to 1,927 adults and children and also assisted 1,200 children at the Child Study Center. The 1988 budget exceeded $1.6 million for a staff of 33 full-time and 17 part-time employees. Project Genesis operates on an annual budget of approximately $126,000 with a total of four full-time equivalant employees.

Based on documented need and expressed interest in the community, Project Genesis began in September 1984 with a start-up grant of $50,000 from the Amon Carter Foundation and funding for a pilot project from the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. It is modeled after a similar program developed by New York University. In 1986, General Dynamics donated six IBM personal computers and specially developed software to be used by program participants to address cognitive deficits. Another local grantmaker provided funds for biofeedback equipment to help teach clients relaxation techniques to control motor problems brought on by stress – a common problem for persons with head injuries.

Description of the Program

Project Genesis is an intensive, outpatient, employment-focused

Al Fisk is shown here during the completion of his job trial as a maintenance worker.

rehabilitation program for individuals with traumatic brain injuries. Motor vehicle accidents are the most common cause of these injuries. Referrals to Project Genesis come from the state vocational rehabilitation agency, physicians, rehabilitation nurses, and private individuals. Potential participants are typically referred after they have completed acute care and have achieved a stable level of functioning that generally includes significant, permanent, residual disabilities. The primary goal of the program is to prepare each individual to obtain competitive employment using cognitive retraining, work conditioning, appropriate therapies, and support services through an interdisciplinary team approach.

The program operates four hours a day, four days a week and is divided into a structured schedule of activities. These are designed to improve cognitive abilities such as memory, reasoning, judgement, abstract thinking, and problem solving; to introduce, practice and reinforce strategies that compensate for impaired function; to increase stamina and endurance for employment; and to facilitate re-entry into the job market at a level appropriate to each individual's capabilities and interests. Upon entry to the program, a participant's functional deficits and residual strengths are identified through extensive neuropsychological testing. A unique program of exercises and activities is then designed to resolve or minimize deficits, develop compensatory skills, and make use of whatever "splinter skills" the person has after his or her injury. Some services are provided in small groups so that participants have the opportunity to meet, learn from, and provide support and encouragement to each other.

The program is designed to serve a maximum of 10 to 12 persons at a time and the ratio of clients to staff does not exceed three-to-one. All staff are Masters-level professionals with degrees in speech therapy, occupational therapy, rehabilitation counseling, or psychology. Each participant has a case manager to assure that the full range of needed services are provided and coordinated. The program shares space, staff, and equipment with other Easter Seal programs such as Worker Rehabilitation, a work hardening program.

Project Genesis staff have determined that family support is essential to the training, skill development, and employment success of each individual. Consequently the program *requires* family members to participate in planning and reviewing progress to reinforce program objectives. Their active participation is beneficial and helps them understand the abilities and limitations of a family member with head injuries. In addition, family members who are helping loved ones with disabilities also have adjustment and acceptance problems which need to be addressed.

During the **Assessment Phase,** staff identify problem areas for which compensatory techniques will be developed and practiced. At the end of the month-long assessment, a treatment plan is designed to meet the person's specific needs. A formal meeting is scheduled with the individual participant, family members, and staff to discuss results of the assessment and the proposed goals and strategies.

The individualized treatment plan is implemented in the **Retraining Phase.** The next five to seven months are spent working on the problems considered to be the most severe and limiting to the individual in regard to employment. The latest in com-

During his Project Genesis job trial, Ron McCracken works in packaging and assembly.

puter technology is used to assist in relearning and strengthening cognitive skills. Participants have formal monthly meetings with staff regarding progress, but also receive immediate feedback on a daily basis from each involved staff member.

The purpose and intent of the **Job Trial Phase** is to assess the person's ability to transfer the techniques and strategies learned in the facility to actual job situations. Private sector employers have been quite receptive to Easter Seal's staff in arranging short-term job training and employment opportunities for individuals in areas such as building and grounds maintenance, clerical (filing and general office), assembly, fast food, and telephone sales. Once on the job, staff monitor progress, assist with problem-solving strategies, and provide ongoing counseling and support to help ensure successful job performance. Job trials generally last three to five months and vary according to the individual's abilities as well as the severity and type of disabilities. Frequently, these placements become permanent jobs. To date, about 75% of Project Genesis participants have been successful in achieving and maintaining competitive employment.

Follow-up services from Project Genesis staff continue for a period of six months to one year after placement on a permanent job, depending on the need. Easter Seal has made a commitment to program participants to help with replacement, if needed for any reason, for as long as Project Genesis is in operation. In 1988 the National Easter Seal Society chose the Tarrant County Head Injury Program as a "Model Program." Other Easter Seal Societies across the nation will be encouraged and assisted to develop similar programs.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:

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or,
Larry Morton, Program Manager
Head Injury Programs
Easter Seal Society for
Children and Adults of
Tarrant County
617 Seventh Avenue
Fort Worth, TX 76104-2799
Telephone: (817) 336-8693

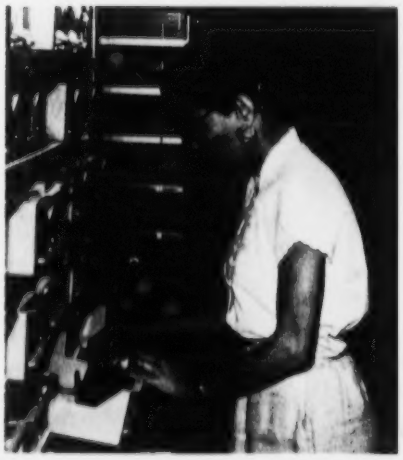
Finalist/Employability Development

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

West Columbia, South Carolina

This is the first time that a state rehabilitation agency has been selected as a finalist in the Search for Excellence. The same agency was also selected as a finalist in this year's Occupational Skill Training category. The Employability Development program, called the Vocational Rehabilitation/Citizens and Southern Bank Job Readiness Program, began in 1973. It is a cooperative venture between the VR Department and a large bank (C&S) and takes place at the bank's Operation Center in Columbia. It is designed to provide work habit and work skills training for persons with severe disabilities that will result in competitive employment. The largest percentage of persons served have mental illness (59%) and/or a physical disability (42%). Typically they have very poor work histories and problems with work habits and skills.

Following referral to the program, potential participants are evaluated at the Department's Columbia Vocational Rehabilitation Center on simulated work tasks, then on actual jobs at the Operation Center. Those successfully completing the evaluation are admitted to the program and



Gaynelle Glenn checks files as part of her duties in quality control at the Citizens and Southern Bank.

earn while they are learning, receiving training and support from both on-site program and bank staff. The program serves about 20 people at any one time. Generally they remain in the program from three to six months on jobs such as processing cancelled checks for commercial accounts, credit card validation, and check recoding. About half of those entering the program obtain competitive employment either within C&S Bank or in other banks and insurance

companies in the area, earning an average of $148 per week.

The program is an excellent example of a productive partnership between business and government, benefitting everyone involved – especially people with disabilities.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:

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or,
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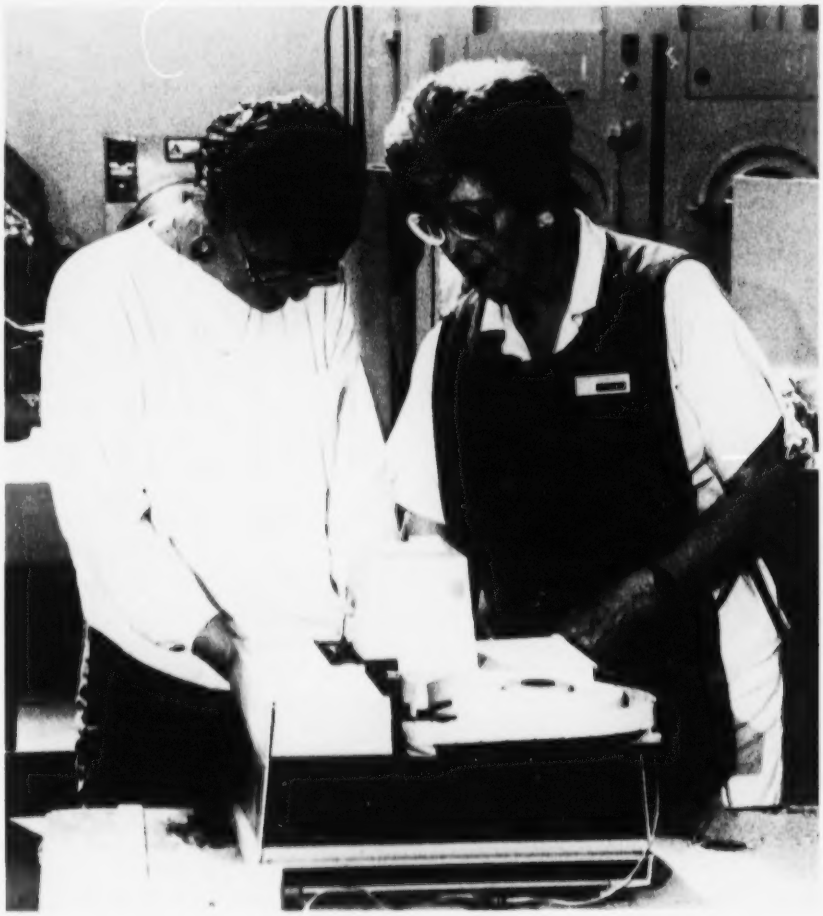
Telephone: (803) 822-5313

Finalist/Employability Development

Goodwill Industries of Lane County

Eugene, Oregon



Goodwill trainer Phyllis Weathers demonstrates a pin-ticketing job to Jane Cochell, a trainee in work adjustment.

With a $2.8 million annual budget, Lane County Goodwill serves a moderate sized area in west central Oregon, population 150,000. In addition to Transitional Services, the employability development program, Goodwill also has supported employment and sheltered employment programs. Transitional Services has an excellent reputation in the community for getting good results. In a recent year 59% of the people served were placed into competitive employment – almost twice the rate of the average applicant (31%).

Transitional Services has a staff of six and serves 70-75 people each year at a total cost of about $183,000. Program participants have a variety of physical disabilities, mental retardation, and mental illness. Many also have limiting secondary disabilities. Services include individualized work adjustment training, vocational evaluation, skill training, and job placement. To supplement work sites within Goodwill, the program uses job sites in the community for evaluation and training purposes. Follow-up contacts continue for at least 12 months after job placement.

One of the factors that contributes to program success is the very active involvement of its business advisory committee. Its 36 members meet monthly and are useful sources of information on employer needs in the community. They also provide leads for job openings and conduct simulated job interviews with program participants to help prepare them for their job search.

This program demonstrates that exemplary performance does not require unusual or expensive resources. By developing and sustaining a good working relationship with referral sources and employers and by focusing staff efforts on the goal of competitive employment, Lane County Goodwill Industries has shown that excellent results can follow.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:

Margaret Theisen
Director of Rehabilitation
or,
Mike Dubbs, Executive Director
Goodwill Industries of Lane County
855 Seneca Road
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Telephone: (503) 345-1801

Facility-Based Work Services

WINNER

Goodwill Industries – Suncoast, Inc.

St. Petersburg, Florida

FINALISTS

Minnesota Diversified Industries

St. Paul, Minnesota

Napa Valley, P.S.I., Inc.

Napa, California

Introduction

Applications in this category were solicited from several models of facility-based work services programs including work activity and sheltered employment. These programs provide persons with severe disabilities an opportunity to earn an income in a protected setting. They serve people who are unable to obtain or keep competitive jobs in the community because of low productivity or behaviors that are unacceptable in the workplace. Participants work in sheltered settings such as a workshop or in sites such as facility-operated restaurants and retail stores. Worker earnings are based on individual productivity.

Programs vary in their expectations. The major goal for some is a steady income over a long period of time, while others view their programs as a transition to supported work, competitive employment, or to initiatives that prepare people for competitive employment such as occupational skill training.

Some programs in this category also provide services designed to enhance employability (such as basic education and job seeking skills), while others offer services that help participants live independently in the community. Programs that serve people with the most severe disabilities may also provide recreation and leisure time activities.

Eighty-two applications for facility-based work services were received from facilities in 29 states. Together they serve over 8,300 people a year at an annual cost of over $34 million. Data presented here is based on 78 programs for which complete information was available.

The following median values characterize the "typical" facility-based work services program:

- Annual earnings plus fringe benefits of $1,443 per participant
- Annual participant turnover of 19%; a third of whom obtained competitive employment, supported employment or occupational skill training
- Cost of $21.20 per day for each person
- Serves 60 persons a day, provides 25 hours of paid work per week, pays hourly wages of $1.37, provides three hours a week of work-related services and one hour of non work-related services
- Has a staff of nine direct service providers and a ratio of 7.3 participants for each direct services staff
- Total program operating costs, not including participant wages or production materials, of $308,000 per year
- Serves 85 persons a year. Less than 10% of programs serve over 200 individuals per year
- Has been in business 12 years. One in five applicant programs has over 20 years of experience

The level of program excellence for each applicant was determined by using two measures of effectiveness (benefits to persons served), and two measures of program efficiency (productive use of resources). Then an adjustment was

Assessment of Program Excellence

Measures of Excellence	Weighted Values
1. Benefits to persons served	
a. Dollar value of wages plus fringe benefits	50%
b. Percent of persons leaving the program who entered competitive or supported employment or occupational skill training	10%
2. Program efficiency/productivity	
a. Average cost per person per day	10%
b. Ratio of participants to direct service staff	5%
3. Level of severity of persons served	25%
	100%

made in the initial excellence score taking into account the severity of disabilities and other characteristics of participants. The first measure of effectiveness used was the average annual earnings plus the dollar value of fringe benefits such as paid holidays and health care insurance. The second measure of program effectiveness was the percentage of persons who left the program for any reason in the last two years who, at follow-up, were in competitive employment, supported employment, or occupational skill training.

The first of two efficiency or productivity measures was the average cost per day of each person served, using all program operating costs except participant wages and the cost of supplies and production materials. The second efficiency measure was ratio of persons served to the number of direct service staff.

The initial excellence score for each program was then adjusted by the level of severity of participants. The level was based on the average number of characteristics or conditions such as chronic mental illness, moderate/severe/profound mental retardation, major behavior problems in a work setting, productivity level of 25% or less at the time of entry into the program, etc. In effect, programs serving people with many problems or more serious limitations had their excellence scores increased.

The importance of each measure is reflected by the assigned weights which are listed in the table on page 20. The weights indicate how much each measure contributed to the overall excellence score.

The percentage of persons served by these programs who had various disabilities and other characteristics related to lower benefits and higher costs are shown below. The "typical" person had an average of 3.0 such disabling conditions or other characteristics.

- Mental retardation, mild level (50%)
- Mental retardation, moderate or severe (36%)
- Medical or physical condition that restricts activities (31%)
- Significant limiting physical/medical condition (12%)
- Mental illness, diagnosed (15%)
- Chronic mental illness, history of multiple or extensive hospitalization (7%)
- Unacceptable behaviors at work (30%)
- Require assistance/supervision of another person to live in the community (72%)
- Low productivity at the time of entering the program, 25% or lower, as compared to non-disabled workers (53%)

Winner/Facility-Based Work Services

Goodwill Industries–Suncoast, Inc.

St. Petersburg, Florida

Goodwill Industries-Suncoast in St. Petersburg, Florida demonstrates that an organization with a history of traditional programs can do an outstanding job. Most notable was its significant shift from facility-based to community-based programming in 1987 and 1988. Its Work Services program, which includes both sheltered employment and developmental training, has aggressively adopted the goal of maximizing movement into employment in the community, whether it is supported employment or competitive employment in Goodwill or with other employers. The most dramatic evidence of this change has been the virtual elimination of sheltered employment and facility-based work adjustment. The sheltered employment component had 68 participants per day until June 1987 when the change took effect; by mid-1989 it was down to four. During fiscal year 1988, 81 people left Work Services (both sheltered and developmental levels) and 57 of them (70%) obtained supported employment or competitive employment, either within the Goodwill operation or elsewhere. Facility-based work adjustment has been replaced by job tryouts in the community, supported employment, and IMPACT (time-limited job coaching in competitive jobs.)

History, Background

Established in 1954, Goodwill Industries-Suncoast, Inc. provides vocational rehabilitation and life skill services, training, and employment opportunities, and community housing to improve the quality of life for people who are disabled or disadvantaged. The organization is also committed to provide a cost-effective business and industrial operation designed to generate employment opportunities and "to recycle, manufacture or produce goods and services in a manner that maximizes the agency's self-sufficiency and contributes to the conservation and increased utilization of the community's material and economic resources."

Goodwill-Suncoast is headquartered in St. Petersburg and has a targeted service delivery area covering eight counties in West Central Florida. Many of its service programs are provided directly in those communities to make them more accessible to participants. It also operates 23 retail sales stores throughout the area that together generate well over $5 million in annual sales, providing significant revenue to help reimburse the cost

Ron Rucker sorts name tags for the Cintas Corporation as part of his sub-contract work at Goodwill.

of vocational training and other services. The area has a diverse economy with the largest number of jobs provided by service industries and light manufacturing. The facility has nearly 600 employees and annual revenues of nearly $10 million. The Human Services Department, responsible for all rehabilitation programs, includes approximately 50 professionals, 70 para-professionals, and 25 support staff.

Goodwill-Suncoast has also played a major role in the establishment of branch operations that are now autonomous Goodwills in West Palm Beach, Tallahassee, Sarasota, Fort Myers, and Lakeland, Florida. The Human Services Department at Goodwill-Suncoast has grown significantly in the past 10 years in the number of people served, the diversity of the programs available, and revenue generated – exceeding $2.5 million in 1988-89, up from $220,000 in 1977. The nationwide move toward deinstitutionalization also resulted in program changes at Goodwill-Suncoast. The proportion of persons with multiple and severe disabling conditions has increased, requiring a more intensive and a more extensive range of services.

The Human Services Department consists of four major components that offer the following service programs:

Vocational Services

Vocational Evaluation, Employee Vocational Rehabilitation Services, IMPACT (short-term job coaching), Food Service Training, Telecommunications Training, and Supported Employment.

Developmental Services

Suncoast Residential Training Center, Life Enrichment, and Developmental Training and Sheltered Employment (the winning Facility-Based Work Services program.)

Corrections

Orange County and Chatham County Community Treatment Centers, and the Tampa Bay Community Treatment Center.

Housing, Community Independence

Freedom Villages I and II, providing 129 barrier-free apartments for independent functioning people with disabilities, and Suncoast Residential Training Center.

Description of the Winning Work Services Program

The main goal of the Work Services Program (which includes both Developmental Training and Sheltered Employment) is to provide transitional paid employment to persons with disabilities to maximize their vocational potential while strengthening their capabilities. The people served by this program (127 in fiscal 1988) are persons not readily absorbed into the competitive job market because of their low productivity. All have mild or moderate mental retardation and many have other conditions such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and psychiatric and behavior problems.

The facility-based program provides paid work and training activities through subcontracts and Goodwill's operation for processing and recycling of donated goods. Sub-contracts provide work in wrapping, sorting, assembly, and packaging. A long-standing contract with Isaly Klondike (makers of ice cream bars) involves the preparation of promotional packets for use in stores throughout the country. Goodwill job sites provide work in materials handling, sorting, packing, furniture cleaning, and food service jobs.

The work provides income and the means to develop or improve job-related skills such as staying on a task, following supervisory instructions, the ability to get along with others, improving production rates, and learning job-specific skills. The program uses a variety of training methods to enhance each individual's ability to be more self-sufficient and function in a less structured work environment.

People are referred to this program from a number of organizations and individuals in the community and it is supported by fees from the Office of Developmental Services. Individual participants are selected by the District Interagency Screening

Committee which consists of representatives from the Office of Developmental Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, local schools, service providers such as Goodwill-Suncoast. The Committee ensures that each individual is matched to the appropriate resource best able to meet his or her special needs.

One of the major factors that accounts for the success of this program is its commitment to function as a time-limited program. Each participant is expected to remain only as long as is necessary before they move to competitive or supported employment, ideally within six months to three years. Setting such an expectation encourages the participant, his or her family, and the staff to work on *how* to make the gains and other changes necessary to accomplish that objective rather than accepting work services as a life-long program.

Each participant is expected to remain only as long as is necessary before they move to competitive or supported employment, ideally within six months to three years.

The Developmental Training component serves 42 persons age 16 years or older who have mild or moderate mental retardation. Most participants have a variety of secondary functional limitations or conditions including cerebral palsy, seizure disorders, psychiatric problems, or disruptive behaviors. Most also need assistance or supervision with daily living activities. Their level of productivity at the time they enter the program is less than 50% compared to non-disabled workers, and in many instances, considerably less. Direct services staff for this program include three technicians (who provide supervision and training), two case managers, and a behavior specialist who consults with staff and works directly with program participants regarding behavior problems.

Within the first 30 days, all clients are assessed in basic skills and an individual program plan is developed to address areas of need. Short-term goals are reviewed monthly and semi-annual progress reports are furnished to the participant and the referring agency. A more detailed habilitation plan is also developed yearly for each participant, reviewed and discussed with the person, his or her parents, guardian, group home liaison, referring counselor, and Goodwill program staff. Parents are actively involved in the process to enlist their support for the long-range goal of job placement.

There are no unique features, special gimmicks or short-cuts to account for the success of Goodwill-Suncoast's Facility-Based Work Services program. However, it does have all the components and qualities that characterize Excellence:

- Program staff set clear goals for participants and then work as a team to achieve them.
- Staff are encouraged to be resourceful and innovative.
- Pursuit of further staff education and training is encouraged in many ways including tuition reimbursements.
- Staff make good use of resources within Goodwill and in the community (such as exposure to various jobs through try outs).
- Goodwill has a good working relationship, nurtured over the years, with area business and industry. This helps maintain a steady flow of contract work and creates accepting environments for job placement.
- Through its supported employment and IMPACT programs, Goodwill is willing to place people into competitive work settings before they are necessarily "ready." They recognize that gains in productivity and other work behaviors occur more readily when workers are exposed to real jobs and are provided the

Under a contract with the Isaly Klondike Company, Megan Strahsmeier prepares a promotional packet in the Developmental Training Program.

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support and guidance of a job coach to make that transition.

All in all, Goodwill-Suncoast demonstrates that work services can be a vital and successful alternative in a full array of vocational programs.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
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or,
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Finalist/Facility-Based Work Services

Minnesota Diversified Industries

St. Paul Minnesota

Minnesota Diversified Industries (MDI) characterizes itself as an "affirmative industry." Its philosophy or mission is "to explore the humanistic potential of business while restoring to individuals with handicaps, real career opportunities." Participants are considered to be employees rather than clients and jobs are permanent careers. MDI has been in operation over 25 years and has an annual operating budget of $5.2 million. About 80% of its 580 employees have significant disabilities, and are working here either because they cannot find jobs with private sector employers because of their disabilities and low productivity, or they choose to work in a facility-based setting. A substantial number of people without disabilities are hired in order to provide an integrated work force.

Diane Brecht inserts collated stamps into packets as Ted Gilson of MDI and Gordon Morrison of the U.S. Postal Service observe her work.

The winning program, the Philatelic Division, is one of three product divisions within MDI employing about 140 people at any one time with a staff of five. Under contract with the U. S. Postal Service, it is the nation's major packager of collector stamps and stamps for vending machines – processing over 100 million per year. Jobs include collating, inspection, mounting, packaging, and hand cancelling of new stamp releases.

Employees with disabilities in this program earned an average of $2.32 per hour in 1987-1988. Their overall average level of productivity is about 35% of standard (compared to workers without disabilities) and the range is from 10% to 100%. Earnings are supplemented by one of the most comprehensive fringe benefit packages for facility-based work services in the country, including paid holidays, vacation and sick leave, medical insurance, a retirement plan, and profit-sharing. Although it is by design a low turnover program, in a recent two year period 75% of "employees" leaving the program obtained competitive or supported employment in the community or occupational skill training.

MDI has been the subject of a number of publications and has attracted visitors from several foreign countries interested in learning more about the affirmative industry model of employment program for persons with disabilities.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
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or,
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Finalist/Facility-Based
Work Services

Napa Valley P.S.I., Inc.

Napa, California

This is the second consecutive year that Napa Valley P.S.I., Inc. has been selected as one of the finalists in this program category. Since its beginning in 1970, P.S.I.'s purpose has been "to provide a learning and earning environment for persons with severe disabilities." It's annual budget is just over $2 million. The Sheltered Employment Program and its 18 direct service staff provide work and support services to about 135 client-employees at any one time. Daily earnings average over $15. Total annual payroll and fringe benefits for client-employees is over $400,000.

Persons served in this program have a variety of disabling conditions including mental retardation, physical disabilities, and mental illness. Some are also in treatment for mental illness at nearby Napa State Hospital. Over 80% had very low worker productivity when they entered P.S.I. – below 25% when compared to non-disabled people in similar jobs. Most had never worked before. In addition to paid work opportunities, training, and support services to maximize productivity and employability, client-employees are provided tutoring in reading, math, language development, and driver education and training through Napa Valley College at no cost to the program or participants.

Prime manufacturing of wooden file boxes and walnut credenzas for the federal government provides the largest number of job stations. PSI has been producing caskets since the program began. The most recent diversification includes engineered roof and floor trusses for local contractors. These manufacturing areas function much like small business units and are presented to the community as Napa Casket and PSI Truss. Client-employees perform each step in the manufacturing process using tools, power equipment, and specially adapted fixtures. Tasks include sawing, sanding, assembly, finishing, quality checking, and packing the products.

Miki Wong and Joan Berg install hinges on file boxes used by the federal government.

Program participants have a variety of options, including supported employment, placement in regular competitive employment, or remaining at PSI as long-term, essentially permanent, employees. PSI's Sheltered Employment Program continues to demonstrate that persons with severe disabilities, given the appropriate environment, encouragement and support, can be productive participants in the work force.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
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or,
Betty Moore, Director,
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Telephone: (707) 255-0177

WINNER

Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind

Little Rock, Arkansas

FINALISTS

Multi Resource Centers, Inc.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

West Columbia, South Carolina

Introduction

The 1988 Search in this category focused attention on specific courses for occupations above entry level, courses that typically require at least average ability to learn and take several months to complete. Applicants provided data on training such as computer programming, desktop publishing, secretarial, electronic technician, service representative, and computer assisted drafting. This Search was undertaken to publicize higher level training courses for persons with disabilities.

The primary goal of these programs is to enable participants to obtain competitive employment related to skills acquired in a specific training course. Services are primarily designed to develop skills for particular occupations rather than to modify general work habits. Applications on 30 different training courses were received from 25 organizations in 14 states. Data presented here is based on 24 courses for which complete information was available. These courses together train nearly 1,000 people each year at a total annual cost of $2 million.

The following data using median values characterizes the "typical" occupational skill training course:

- A success rate of 55% in training-related employment three months after training
- Average weekly earnings of $234 in training-related employment at three month follow-up
- Training completion rate of 80%
- A direct service staff of two full-time equivalent persons serving 47 trainees a year
- A ratio of 3.1 participants for each direct service staff
- An average cost per full-time equivalent staff of $32,000
- An average annual budget of $162,000

The following table lists the measures and the weight assigned to each measure. The weights indicate how much each measure contributed to the "overall excellence score." Six measures were initially used to determine each applicant's level of excellence. The first of three measures of effectiveness (benefits to those served) was the percent of all persons (not just those completing the course) who were employed in a training-related full-time job three months after leaving the course. The second measure was the percent of trainees who obtained any benefit, ranging from part-time or seasonal jobs unrelated to the training to full-time training-related competitive employment and further occupational skill training. The third effectiveness measure was the average weekly earnings of those who were in training-related employment at follow-up. Two measures of program productivity or efficiency were used: the average cost per

Assessment of Program Excellence

Measures of Excellence	Weighted Values
1. Benefits to persons served	
a. Percent who obtained full-time training-related competitive employment	50%
b. Percent who obtained training-related or other competitive employment, supported employment, or further skill training	10%
c. Average weekly earnings in training-related full-time employment	10%
2. Productivity, efficiency	
a. Average cost per trainee per day	5%
b. Average cost per direct service staff	5%
c. Ratio of trainees to direct service staff	5%
3. Level of severity of persons served	15%
	100%

trainee per day and the ratio of trainees to direct service staff.

The initial excellence score for each training course was then adjusted for the level of difficulty of persons served. This level was based on the number of disabling conditions or other characteristics of those served that correlated with effectiveness and efficiency. The average number of such characteristics for Search applicants in this category was 1.4. Courses serving more difficult trainees received a higher final excellence score than those serving people with fewer disabling conditions.

The percentage of persons served by these programs who had the following characteristics are shown below:

- Medical or physical condition that restricts activities (75%)
- Significant limiting medical/physical condition, requiring modification of the work site (29%)
- Mental illness, diagnosed (28%)
- Chronic mental illness, history of multiple or extensive hospitalization (7%)
- Unacceptable work behaviors (4%)
- Require the assistance/supervision of another person to live in the community (7%)

Winner/Occupational Skill Training

Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind

Little Rock, Arkansas

The Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind Taxpayer Service Representative (TSR) training course is the winner in the 1988 Occupational Skill Training category. The TSR course is a cooperative venture between AEB and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and has been operating since 1967 out of AEB's headquarters in Little Rock. Using today's technology, the IRS and AEB have developed methods to train more than 400 people with visual impairments in a challenging professional occupation which demands high quality performance. The TSR program has a nearly 100 percent successful placement record and its graduates are employed in IRS offices or service centers across the nation where they assist citizens with tax questions over the telephone.

History, Background

Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind (AEB) was established in 1939 and reorganized in 1946 to offer a broad range of comprehensive rehabilitation services including counseling, personal adjustment training, vocational evaluation, vocational training, and job placement for adults who are blind and visually impaired.

More than 95% are still on the job and some have been promoted into higher management and decision making positions such as group manager, branch chief, regional analyst, and national analyst.

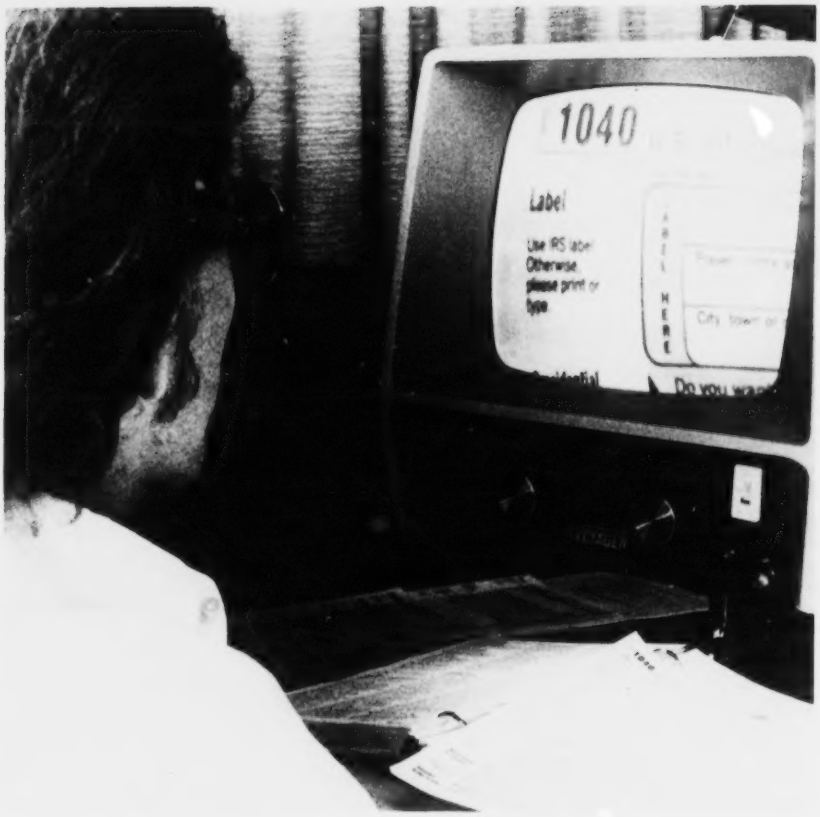
In addition to the TSR course, AEB's vocational skill training courses include bicycle assembly and repair, clerical skills, computer programmer, collections representative, medical transcriptionist, office automation specialist, small business management, small engine repair, switchboard/receptionist, and word processing.

AEB has an operating budget of $2.2 million and a total staff of 70. A 50-member volunteer board of directors is comprised primarily of top leaders in Lions organizations of Arkansas and surrounding states. A Service Advisory Committee meets annually to review AEB programs and make recommendations to keep them current and viable. The Committee is made up of professionals in the field of rehabilitation, providers of services to the blind, administrators of state agencies, and consumers.

AEB has worked closely with the IRS since 1967 when an IRS district manager in Little Rock toured the agency and concluded that there were jobs within the IRS that could be done by people with visual impairments. After much discussion and negotiation at the local and national levels of IRS, AEB was authorized, in a pilot effort, to train three individuals to be taxpayer service representatives.

Description of the Winning Program

People are referred to the TSR course by State Services for the Blind agencies throughout the country. Those referred have a wide variety of backgrounds, but all are legally blind. Some have had professional careers prior to the onset of blindness, some have been employed and are ready for a career change, while others have never worked. Some are well-educated, with degrees, but have no marketable skills. To be accepted into the TSR course, applicants must have at least a high school diploma, good compensatory skills, and an ability to communicate orally in a clear, concise manner. They must also be psychologically and physically well-adjusted to their blindness and prepared in basic skills necessary to live and travel independently. Those who appear to have the potential to succeed but do not meet the adjustment and compensatory skills criteria are referred to programs for training and counseling services. This enables the trainers and trainees to focus on skills and knowledge necessary for employment as



To help compensate for visual impairments, AEB trainees can use a closed-circuit television system to review information on IRS form 1040.

taxpayer service representatives. Support services, such as travel orientation in the new communities where graduates relocate, are provided by referral to vocational rehabilitation agencies for the blind in larger metropolitan areas.

A one-month assessment is conducted at AEB to determine suitability of those referred for training. The battery of tests and assessments given are used to determine if they have the specific skills needed to successfully complete training and to succeed as taxpayer service representatives. The potential trainees' adjustment to blindness and independent living skills are also confirmed to assure that such problems will not interfere with employment.

One of the most striking features of this program and one which accounts for much of its success is the process of selecting trainees. A review panel, made up of AEB staff and potential IRS employers from those IRS offices needing new taxpayer service representatives, meets to review those applicants that make it through the assessment process. During this two day period, they examine the skills and performance levels of each potential trainee, discuss specific job openings at various IRS locations and then select those who will enter the training phase of the program. In effect, those selected are guaranteed job placement upon completion of the training program and they know specific positions and locations of jobs in advance for which they are preparing. AEB trains 14 people a year in this particular course, seven in each of the two training cycles. Trainees live on AEB's one square-block campus while participating in the program.

The four-and-a-half month course is taught primarily by recent IRS retirees who are familiar with current operational procedures and is monitored by IRS administrators to ensure proper training procedures are followed. The training received by AEB clients is the same as for IRS trainees and includes instruction in tax laws, IRS forms, reporting requirements for individual taxpayers and small businesses, and the development of effective listening and communication skills. AEB staff supplement this training in areas such as how to use various adaptive devices on the job.

AEB uses a variety of adaptive equipment for training; the same equipment that will be used on the job. Trainees who are "print readers" may use a screen enlarger (modified TV screen) to accommodate for their level of vision loss. Braille readers are trained on a VersaBraille machine which electronically transcribes written material into Braille. Extensive information on tax forms, instructions, and interpretations of IRS policy become accessible to the fingertips of the trainee without resorting to bulky Braille sheets. This enables the person without sight to quickly access these reference materials and to respond accurately to taxpayer questions. Talking calculators are also available which provide verbal feedback on mathematical calculations, confirming the numbers entered, calculations used and results. This equipment is then provided to the new employee to use on his or her new job by the state agency that referred the person to this course. The cost of relocation to the job in a new community and other special needs may also be covered.

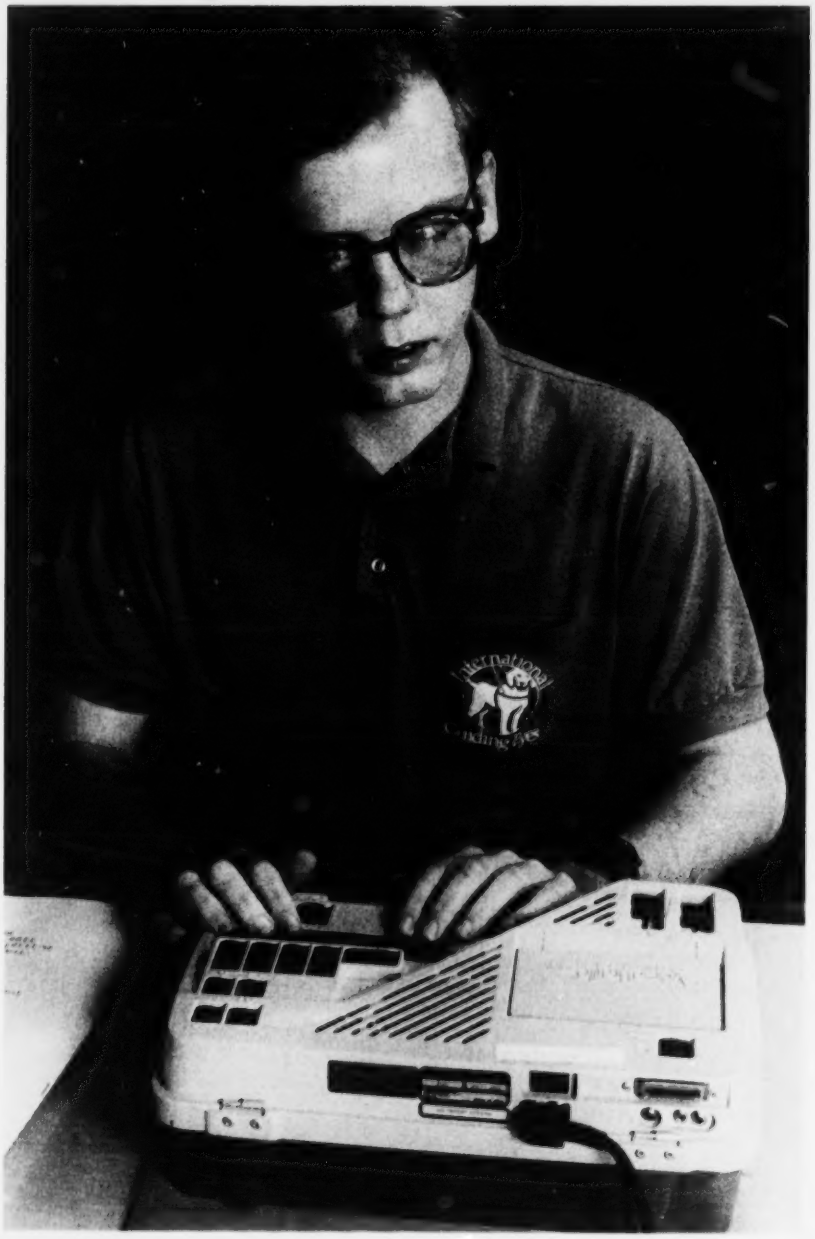
Although training persons with visual impairments takes longer (four months compared to five weeks for the IRS course for sighted individuals) and costs approximately $9,400 per person, IRS administrators have determined that this program is cost-effective as there is virtually no turnover among AEB graduates. Those completing the

program have proven to be stable, hardworking employees. More than 95% are still on the job and some have been promoted into higher management and decision making positions such as group manager, branch chief, regional analyst, and national analyst.

AEB also provides one-day orientation to IRS managers who will be supervising program graduates to help them understand blindness and how to best assist their new employees. This orientation is provided concurrently with the two-day selection panel meetings. Follow-up contacts between AEB, the new taxpayer service representatives, and the various IRS offices may be initiated by any one of the three, and will continue as long as necessary to ensure that the placement is successful. Although the IRS hires many part-time temporary employees during the annual income tax season, graduates of the AEB training program are all hired as permanent, full-time employees. They begin work for the IRS at a GS-5 level ($15,738 annually), qualify for a variety of fringe benefits, and enjoy secure employment.

In 1984, AEB Executive Director Jim Cordell received the IRS Commissioner's Award on behalf of his agency for this and other training programs for the IRS. The award said, in part: "For your outstanding contribution to the Internal Revenue Service in training visually impaired individuals for employment with the Service. Through your assistance, the Internal Revenue Service has gained more than 250 well trained, dedicated employees who have contributed significantly to our mission to encourage voluntary compliance with the tax laws. Your obvious commitment to helping others serves as an inspiration to many and has greatly enhanced the image of the Service."

AEB is quick to credit national IRS executives and administrators for their level of support and commitment to the program and its graduates. Their participation and interest have been invaluable. The willingness of the IRS to involve supervisory personnel in the screening and selection process in Little Rock and their participation in the "Orientation to Blindness," coupled with the efforts of AEB has resulted in an extraordinarily successful approach to skill training and placement.



During a comprehensive training course on tax law, David Wolfe uses a VersaBraille machine to research questions on IRS regulations.

For more information on this exemplary program, contact:
Ramona Sangalli, Director of Vocational Services
or,
Jim Cordell, Executive Director
Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind
2811 Fair Park Boulevard
Little Rock, AR 72204
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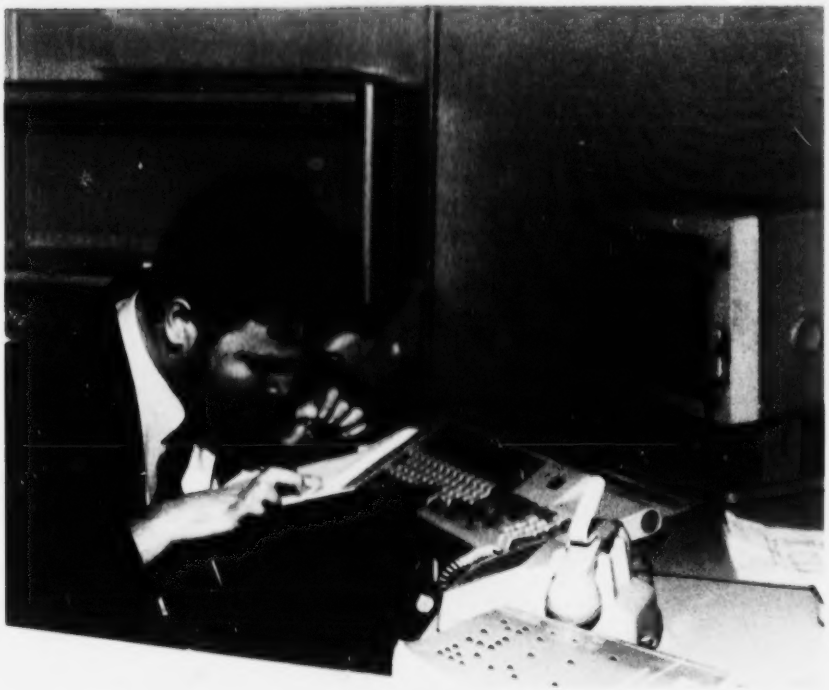

Jerry Repinski, currently employed by Hemar Service Corporation, uses both high technology and readily available adaptive devices to get the job done.

Finalist/Occupational Skill Training

Multi Resource Centers, Inc.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Multi Resource Centers' Twin Cities Computer Training Program was selected as one of the finalists in the Occupational Skill Training category. Students prepare for jobs as computer programmers in business and industry. It is one of a network of similar training programs initiated by IBM which now operates in 35 cities throughout the country. The program started in 1986, has an annual operating budget of $151,000, and a direct service staff of three.

Recruitment, using a number of techniques including newspaper advertising, has stimulated considerable interest. Over 150 people applied last year; 96 were given screening tests and 14 were accepted for the course. Twenty-seven participants have been trained in the three years since the program started. All students have physical or sensory disabilities including spinal cord injuries, blindness and deafness. The largest category, 40%, have quadraplegia.

The MRC course consists of nine months of classroom instruction and three months of full time paid internship with local employers. Instruction includes COBOL programming, MVS Job Control Language and related data processing, and business topics. Students spend part of their training time working directly on computers at Minneapolis Community College. The college participates in recruitment and curriculum development and also provides college credits for the course. Presentations by guest speakers from local businesses and "career days," where each student spends a day on the job with a programmer, help prepare students to successfully compete for jobs.

The program's Business Advisory Council, including data processing executives from 30 area corporations, plays a particularly active role in the program. They are directly involved in recruitment, selection of students, curriculum development, classroom instruction, internship, and job placement. Over 90% of program graduates have been placed in permanent training-related jobs. The average annual starting salary for the most recent graduating class was $23,000.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
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or,
Robert Berlute, President
Multi Resource Centers, Inc.
1900 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404-1995
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Finalist/Occupational Skill Training

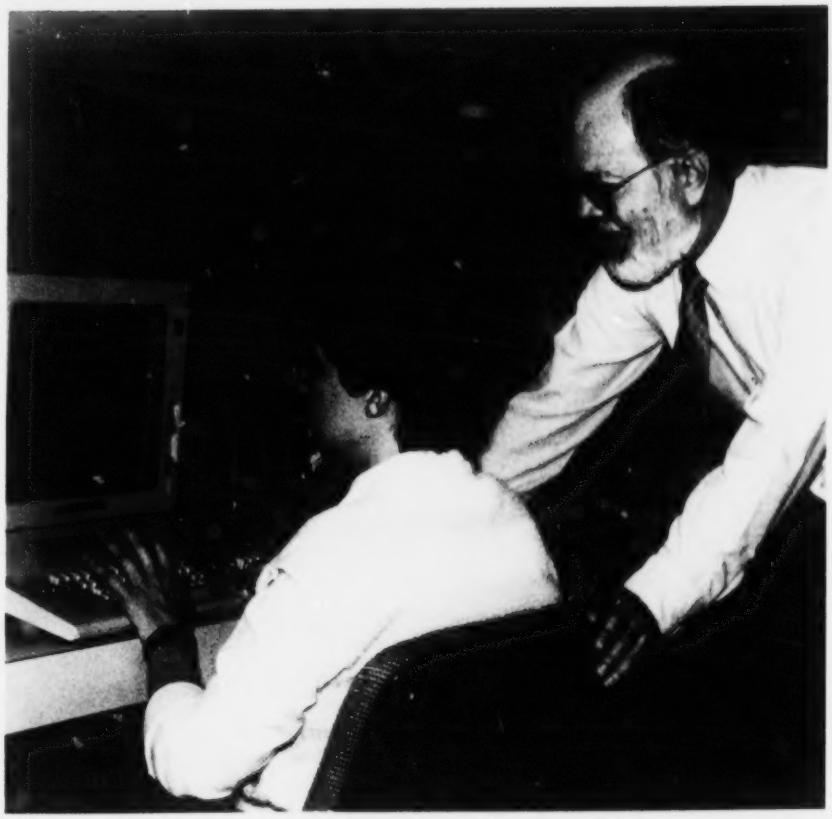
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

West Columbia, South Carolina

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department's Computer Training Program selected as a finalist is located at the Center for Comprehensive Programs in West Columbia. It began in October 1984 with the guidance of a core group of local business leaders. The program provides a high level of skill training to persons with severe physical disabilities. Two-thirds of the students have either quadraplegia or paraplegia. Many require adaptive devices in order to use computer keyboards.

The program's Business Advisory Council (BAC) includes representatives of 40 area companies, government agencies, and educational institutions that hire programmers. BAC members serve on five committees that are actively involved in trainee recruitment and selection, curriculum planning, publicity, evaluation of student progress, arranging for internships, and job placement. Their participation has resulted in training that prepares students for quality jobs in the private and public sectors.

This program was the first of similar training programs in the country to introduce the concept of mentorship where each student is assigned to individual BAC members. Upon completion of the coursework, students are placed in an internship for two months where, as temporary employees of local companies, they gain practical work experience using the skills acquired in training. Most students live in the Center's dormitory and receive, as needed, various rehabilitation and support services such as occupational therapy, recreation, and psychological and nursing services. The program has an annual operating budget of about $112,000 excluding room and board costs.



Trainee Susan Freed receives instruction from Project Administrator James Washam.

In preparation for job placement, students are trained in job seeking skills, including preparation of personal resumes and practice interviews with BAC members. In a recent two year period, 73% of students entering this training program completed the course and obtained permanent, full-time, training-related jobs, earning an average of over $17,000 per year. An additional 19% obtained other employment or further occupational skill training. The success of this particular course prompted the Department to add courses in computer-assisted drafting (CAD operators) and Office Automation.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
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or,
Jim Washam, Training Supervisor
South Carolina Vocational
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"What finer purpose is there for time, effort and knowledge than to do our best in restoring what God intended and disability has taken away."

Jeremiah Milbank
1887-1972

About The JM Foundation

The JM Foundation grants program encompasses several related fields, including: rehabilitation of people with disabilities; prevention and wellness, with an emphasis on individual responsibility for health; expansion of effective extramural care; health-related public policy; alcohol and other drug dependencies; and selected projects in biomedical research and medical education.

The Foundation also has a strong interest in educational activities which strengthen America's pluralistic system of free markets, individualism, entrepreneurship, voluntarism, and private enterprise.

In addition, The JM Foundation Directors recognize that our nation's future depends on the strength of the American family. Accordingly, we support organizations that enhance the quality of family life and provide today's youth with meaningful life experiences, productive employment opportunities, healthy lifestyles, and positive character development.

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